**ASCENSION DAY May 21st 2020**







ST MICHAEL’S CHURCH HOOLE

**ASCENSION DAY SERVICE- JESUS THE KING OF KINGS**

**“This Jesus will come back in the same way you saw Him go into Heaven”.**

*Acts 1: v 11.*

**Welcome to our Ascension Day Service when we recall and celebrate the Risen Jesus returning to His Father before sending His Spirit to be with us for ever. Ascension Day also begins the 10 days of Thy Kingdom Come which is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray between Ascension Day (21 May) and Pentecost (31 May) for more people to come to know Jesus. You will find prayer resources on our website to help you join in this great wave of prayer across our world that many people will come to know the Lord Jesus for themselves.**

**HYMN:** Our first hymn is a great hymn of praise to the Lord Jesus Christ the King of Kings: At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow: [https://youtu.be/OI2rKRCWmOU](about:blank)

1.  At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,  
every tongue confess him king of glory now;  
‘tis the Father's pleasure, that we call him Lord,  
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

2 Humbled for a season, to receive a name  
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came;  
faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,  
brought it back victorious when from death he passed.

3 Christians this Lord Jesus shall return again,  
with His Father’s glory, with his angel train;

for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,  
and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

**Let us pray:**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

**Risen Christ, you have raised our human nature to the throne of heaven:**

**help us to seek and serve you, that we may join you at the Father’s side,**

**where you reign with the Spirit in glory, now and for ever. Amen.**

**BIBLE READING Acts 1: v 1-11.**

Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven

In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teachuntil the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with[[b](about:blank#fen-NIV-26929b)] the Holy Spirit.”

Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”

He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”

Prayer :- Lord Jesus, on the day we remember your Ascension, we pray that we may see something more of your Majesty and your Glory; for your Name’s sake. Amen.

SERMON

In two of the jobs that I have had, on Ascension Day I climbed to the top of the Church tower with the choir and, in the case of Cambridge, also with the University Brass Quartet, and conducted a service from the top of the Tower. It was very dramatic, and we had a good number of people gather below the Tower to listen and to observe. We pointed the loudspeakers in their direction and it was a service that seemed to be very much appreciated, partly because of it being so unusual. But it was much more dramatic for those of us at the top. The view from the Tower was breathtaking – you could see so much of all that was going on around, and for me it really was one of the highlights of the year.

And there is something of this in Jesus’ Ascension – we can look at it, first of all, from below,

A. From the disciples’ point of view. On this last day of the Risen Jesus’ time on earth, the disciples are full of questions – Lord, what happens now, what happens to us, to Israel, to your Kingdom? So Jesus gives them a fact and a challenge.

THE FACT:- They will receive God’s Holy Spirit

THE CHALLENGE:- They are to be Jesus’ witnesses to the ends of the earth.

And we are then given a rather comical picture of the disciples staring upwards, as Jesus is taken from them. We are told that they were staring intently into the sky. Suddenly two men, presumably angels, address them. Why are you all star-gazing? Why are you all cloud-gazing? You have a job to do – go and be witnesses, as Jesus told you. And remember – this Jesus will one day return. There will be a Second Coming of Jesus to wind up the world.

B. referring to the angels points us to seeing Jesus’ Ascension from Heaven’s point of view. For Jesus’ return to Heaven must have been accompanied with great glory, great fanfare, a kind of majestic procession. Jesus’ work on earth was completed. He had died on the cross, to secure victory over sin, over death and evil. And Jesus now resumes the glory which He had with his Father before the world began. Which means that, as a result of His Ascension, Jesus is both

RESTING – after achieving on earth all He came to do

- after fulfilling his Father’s will, seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

AND, at the same time, WORKING. We are told that Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us, as we continue the work that Jesus entrusted to His followers on that day of Ascension, of being witnesses to Him.

We have an opportunity for a particular focus on our task as witnesses with the initiation of “Thy Kingdom Come.” The encouragement to use the next ten days specifically to pray for that very task of the Good News of Jesus being taken out to all the world. You will hear more detail about this, but meanwhile we remember that:-

The time is short to pass on this glorious message

The task is urgent – Jesus will one day return, as the angels promised. And the issues are immense, as Jesus, in ascending into Heaven, has opened up the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers (as our Prayer Book Te Deum puts it) to follow on and to enter in and share this indescribable glory.

Prayer:- Lord Jesus, as we praise you for your return in Majesty to Heaven, we pray that you will give us your Spirit, to enable us to be faithful witnesses to you for your glory’s sake. Amen.

**PRAYERS:**

At the Name of Jesus **every knee shall bow**

Every tongue confess Him **King of glory now.**

Lord, we need the message of Ascension in our Church. We are easily discouraged by failure or by disappointment. Give us confidence, not in our church, but in your Church, not in our faith, but in your Gospel, not in our success, but in your Ascension.

At the Name of Jesus  **every knee shall bow**

Every tongue confess Him **King of glory now**

Lord, we need the message of Ascension in our world. As we struggle with the coronavirus outbreak, we pray for all those seeking a vaccine and a cure. We thank you that today we have the opportunity to express our gratitude to all doctors, nurses, carers and hospital workers who put their lives at such risk day after day. Help us to be aware of friends and neighbours who need any kind of help, and who need the reassurance of a friendly voice.

At the Name of Jesus **every knee shall bow**

Every tongue confess Him **King of glory now**

Lord, we need the message of Ascension in our community. We commit to you all who are sick, who are sad and those who mourn, especially we pray today for the family of Mike Redshaw, as we thank you for his life, his witness and his friendship.

At the Name of Jesus **every knee shall bow**

Every tongue confess Him **King of glory now**

Lord, we need the message of Ascension in our own hearts. Too easily our God is so small; we lift our eyes to the hills instead of to the mountains. Too easily we fail to expect you to be present in our worship, to speak in our hearts, or to change anything in response to our prayers. Too easily we remember our weakness and forget your beauty and your strength. Take us back to the deep truth of a crucified, risen and ascended Lord, so that we may fall joyfully to our knees again and taste the wonder and certainty of His love.

At the Name of Jesus **every knee shall bow**

Every tongue confess Him **King of glory now**

We join now in the prayer Jesus taught his followers to pray:

**Our Father who art in heaven**

**Hallowed be thy name**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done**

**On earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses**

**As we forgive those who trespass against us**

**And lead us not into temptation**

**But deliver us from evil**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen**

**HYMN** Our final hymn is one of praise to the Lord Jesus the King of Kings – Name of all Majesty. https://youtu.be/COLt5pFH8Kk

1. Name of all majesty,  
fathomless mystery,  
King of the ages  
by angels adored;  
power and authority,  
splendour and dignity,  
bow to his mastery,  
Jesus is Lord!  
  
2. Child of our destiny,  
God from eternity,  
love of the Father  
on sinners outpoured;  
see now what God has done  
sending his only Son,  
Christ the beloved One,  
Jesus is Lord!  
  
3. Saviour of Calvary,  
costliest victory,  
darkness defeated  
and Eden restored;  
born as a man to die,  
nailed to a cross on high,  
cold in the grave to lie,  
Jesus is Lord!  
  
4. Source of all sovereignty,  
light, immortality,  
life everlasting  
and heaven assured;  
so with the ransomed, we  
praise him eternally,  
Christ in his majesty,  
Jesus is Lord!

**BLESSING**

May the Love of the Ascended Lord Jesus draw you to Himself

May the Power of the Ascended Lord Jesus strengthen you to serve Him

And may the Joy of the Ascended Lord Jesus fill your hearts

And so may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and all those whom you love, now and for ever more. Amen

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